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Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the United Nations Mission in Colombia

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2261 (2016), in which the Council requested that I present detailed recommendations regarding the size, operational aspects and mandate of the United Nations Mission in Colombia within 30 days of the signing of the ceasefire agreement between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP). It follows my letters dated 4 March and 22 July 2016 (S/2016/211 and S/2016/643). In the latter, I requested an extension until 19 August of the original deadline given in resolution 2261 (2016) to present my recommendations, owing to the postponement of the scoping visits by the Government, FARC-EP and the Mission to the proposed local monitoring and verification sites.

II. Mandate

2. On 23 June 2016, the Government of Colombia and FARC-EP signed the Agreement on the Bilateral and Definitive Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities and Laying down of Arms. The Agreement reaffirmed the mandate outlined in their joint communiqué No. 65, which was conveyed by the President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, to me and to the President of the Security Council in identical letters dated 19 January 2016 (S/2016/53) and which provided the basis for resolution 2261 (2016). As part of its overall responsibility for international verification of the Agreement, the United Nations Mission will assume responsibility for the verification of the laying down of arms. It will coordinate the national, regional and local headquarters of a tripartite monitoring and verification mechanism with the participation of the Government, FARC-EP and the United Nations, which will monitor and verify implementation of the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities. The Mission will be responsible for settling disputes between the parties and will formulate recommendations with regard to the implementation of the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities and the laying down of arms. Finally, it will report independently on compliance with the commitments made by the parties in the Agreement.

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III. Developments

3. On 5 August 2016, the delegations of the Government of Colombia and FARC-EP to the peace talks under way in Havana agreed on a number of protocols concerning the implementation of the Agreement, in relation to both the ceasefire and the cessation of hostilities, and the laying down of arms. The protocols were developed in consultation with the Mission, which has expressed its satisfaction with their quality. They include, in particular, the rules that each party is committed to observing under the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities. The rules include provisions on the separation of forces, the unhindered activities of the monitoring and verification mechanism and the cessation of hostilities between the parties, including hostile propaganda. They also include provisions that prohibit any act or threat of violence against the civilian population, in particular gender-based violence; and any action undermining the population's human rights and basic freedoms. The protocols provide detailed provisions to guide the work of the mechanism, including reporting standards, the settlement of disputes and a code of conduct common to all mechanism members. Finally, the protocols contain a broad set of security procedures applying to different phases of the process, the mechanism personnel, government delegates and civil servants, the members of FARC-EP and the civilian population.

4. Both parties have underlined the importance of the Mission's role in bringing impartial information on the process to the broadest possible audience. At the national level, the Mission's leadership has been sharing positive assessment by the United Nations of the Agreement and its verification procedures with representatives of institutions, political parties, the Catholic Church, civil society, women's organizations and ethnic groups. Efforts to explain the Agreement, the mandate of the Mission and the role of the monitoring and verification mechanism have also been undertaken in the departments and municipalities, where Mission staff have been meeting with Governors, mayors and organizations representing civil society, women and indigenous and Afro-Colombian groups. This first round of dialogue has confirmed the importance of providing detailed information on the implementation of the Agreement and the ongoing preparatory work. Through continuing liaison with authorities and civil society, the Mission will play an important role in addressing questions, dispelling misgivings and responding to the eagerness of national actors, particularly in the conflict areas, to be taken into account.

5. At this point, I want to express my gratitude to the United Nations country team, and, in particular, to the United Nations Development Programme, whose extensive peace programme has paved the way for the building of peace, particularly in the interior of the country. The agencies, funds and programmes have spared no effort to support the establishment of the Mission. In the regions, their staff have used their good offices to introduce the Mission to the local population and authorities, and generously lent the legitimacy they have gained over the years to help build the credibility of the Mission throughout the country. The country team has already made many important contributions to the peace process. I salute the important role that it will continue to play in promoting peace in Colombia.

6. From 8 to 15 August, tripartite delegations including representatives of the Government of Colombia, FARC-EP and the Mission, accompanied by delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the guarantor countries of the

peace process (Cuba and Norway), carried out visits to the transitional local zones for normalization and transitional local points for normalization where the separation of forces and the laying down of arms is to take place. The United Nations party included a senior observer, a representative of the Department of Safety and Security and a logistics officer. The primary goal of the exercise was to agree on the physical boundaries of those areas so that the zones and points and the security zones around them could be effectively observed by the monitoring and verification mechanism. In addition, the delegations sought to determine the area where the local headquarters of the mechanism would be established, and to ascertain the logistical and security challenges involved in the implementation of the Agreement, in particular in terms of physical access to the zones, radio and telephone communications, life support services and basic security conditions. While the security conditions have proved generally conducive in the zones and points, the lack of infrastructure, basic life support services and communication will be a significant challenge to the deployment of the mechanism and the Mission at the local level.

7. The tripartite delegations were, on most visits, joined by representatives of the municipal authorities. Led by the delegate from the Government's High Commissioner for Peace, interaction took place with local authorities, civil society organizations and community members, all of whom expressed their desire to be kept fully informed and their positive attitude towards the implementation of the Agreement. Several adjustments to the initial plans were proposed, including on the basis of concerns raised by indigenous authorities. The exercise brought together the members of the Government, FARC-EP and the Mission who will be working side by side in the observation of the ceasefire. It was a positive experience, which will be further reinforced during the joint training exercise to be held in the coming weeks. Overall, this complex logistical and political undertaking proved very successful and augurs well for further preparation for the implementation of the Agreement.

IV. Tasks

8. As I mentioned in my letter of 22 July 2016, the broad parameters of the Mission will be informed by the terms of the Agreement on a Bilateral and Definitive Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities and Laying Down of Arms.

Verification of the laying down of arms

9. The laying down of arms will require the United Nations to engage in the following tasks, related to a number of overlapping processes, as follows:

(a) The first task, which is to be completed within 30 days of the entry into force of the Agreement, will consist of verifying the retrieval by FARC-EP of collective weapons, grenades and munitions and their transportation to their camps.

(b) The second task, which is to be completed within 60 days of the entry into force of the final peace agreement, will consist of verifying the destruction by FARC-EP of unstable weapons in the areas where their units were deployed prior to the movement to the transitional local zones and points for normalization. This will

be particularly challenging. In most cases, it is anticipated that these verification tasks will be carried out by United Nations observers with the appropriate expertise who will be based in the eight regional headquarters at which the monitoring and verification mechanism and the Mission will be co-located.

(c) The third task will consist of monitoring individual and collective weapons held by FARC-EP in their camps in the transitional local zones and points for normalization. This task will be carried out by United Nations observers permanently based in those camps.

(d) The fourth task, from day 60 to day 150 after the entry into force of the final peace agreement, will consist of receiving individual and collective weapons, grenades and munitions from FARC-EP and storing them in containers or equivalent secure facilities under permanent United Nations observation. The process of receiving individual weapons will unfold sequentially and will be concluded by day 150, when all weapons, grenades and munitions will be in containers. This task will be carried out by United Nations observers assigned to a single camp in each transitional local zone and point for normalization where weapons and ammunition containers will be placed.

(e) The fifth task will consist of transporting the weapons out of the transitional local zones and points for normalization following the destruction of ammunition and the decommissioning of weapons.

Throughout the process, United Nations observers at the regional and national level will be dedicated to processing information relating to the monitoring and verification of the laying down of arms and to supporting local United Nations observers, using secure storage and backup for sensitive information related to weapons and ammunition collection, classification and disposal. They will be responsible for ensuring that, in accordance with the Agreement, the mechanism is kept properly informed. At the end of the process, the Mission will certify the completion of the laying down of arms, and inform the Government, the Security Council and the public accordingly.

Observation of the ceasefire and coordination of the tripartite monitoring and verification mechanism

10. The Mission is the international component and coordinator of the tripartite monitoring and verification mechanism responsible for the monitoring of the ceasefire. Detailed discussions with the Government of Colombia and FARC-EP have led to an agreement on the tasks, structure and composition of the mechanism at all levels. The bulk of the activities of the mechanism will take place at the local level, where it will monitor compliance with the rules of the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities by deploying tripartite monitoring teams. The tripartite teams will be based in the local mechanism headquarters and will carry out five basic tasks as follows:

(a) Organizing the operations of the mechanism, taking into account the coordination of tasks, threat analysis and logistical requirements.

(b) At the start of the ceasefire process, from day 5 to day 30 of the entry into force of the Agreement, monitoring the redeployment of army units and the movement of FARC-EP units to the transitional local zones and points for normalization along agreed routes.

(c) Monitoring the transitional local zones and points for normalization and visiting FARC-EP camps.

(d) Monitoring the security zones around the transitional local zones and points for normalization, and visiting redeployed army units.

(e) Visiting neighbouring population centres, when such centres exist in the vicinity of the transitional local zones and points for normalization, in order to interact with the local population and authorities.

11. Precise guidelines have been agreed upon to help the tripartite teams carry out their functions, including the assessment of incidents and the preparation of reports. According to the Protocols, the primary sources of these reports will include local authorities, churches, local leaders, civil society, women's organizations and local human rights committees.

12. Monitoring by the monitoring and verification mechanism teams will be proactive: not only will they report on possible incidents, they will also seek to bring any situation of non-compliance back into line with the implementation of the provisions on the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities. A strong code of conduct, including on aspects related to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, has been approved, which supplements the rules of behaviour of each component.

13. The United Nations coordinator of the local headquarters of the monitoring and verification mechanism will organize with his or her counterparts the daily tasking of the monitoring teams. For the purpose of ensuring appropriate logistical support to the transitional local zones and points for normalization, a small unit coordinated by a United Nations observer will bring together a representative from the Government, who will assume the main responsibility for the logistical chain, and a representative of FARC-EP. As indicated above, United Nations observers will bear the specific responsibility of helping resolve disputes between the parties if they should arise, and making recommendations to ensure better compliance with the Agreement. Differences between the parties that cannot be resolved at the local headquarters level will be referred to the regional headquarters and ultimately to the national headquarters.

14. The monitoring and verification mechanism will be deployed in eight regional headquarters. In addition to resolving disputes that may arise in the transitional local zones and points for normalization under their supervision, regional headquarters will perform communication, threat analysis, operations, planning and logistical coordination functions. At the regional level, the mechanism headquarters will also interact regularly with authorities, communities and civil society organizations that may wish to share their views and proposals.

15. The national headquarters of the monitoring and verification mechanism, located in Bogotá, will lead the tripartite mechanism. Like the regional headquarters, it will perform communication, threat analysis, operations, planning and logistical coordination functions. Public pronouncements will be issued only at the national level. An investigation team with expertise in a variety of fields will be available to local and regional headquarters to investigate alleged violations of the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities. Information on the implementation of the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities across the country will be compiled and analysed, and periodic public reports will be issued. The national mechanism headquarters in Bogotá will interact regularly with authorities and civil society organizations.

V. Mission structure and size

16. On the basis of the mandate of the Mission as set out in resolution 2261 (2016), the Agreement and the Protocols thereto, the knowledge gained during the Mission's preparatory work since February 2016 and the experience of previous United Nations verification missions, and following a structured planning process, I recommend the following structure and size for the United Nations Mission in Colombia so that it can carry out its functions fully and effectively.

Overall structure

17. Overall political responsibility for the international verification of the Agreement, and for the dispute resolution, recommendation and reporting functions of the Mission will rest with my Special Representative and Head of Mission. He will be supported by a Deputy Special Representative, a Chief Observer, a Director of Mission Support and a Chief of Staff. The Office of the Special Representative will require capacity across five areas: reporting, planning, information management and analysis, public information and liaison with national actors. These functions will require a relatively small number of staff, based in Bogotá.

18. Under the leadership of the Special Representative, the Mission will comprise four components, covering observation, coordination and substantive support, field support and security.

United Nations observer component

19. The United Nations observer component will be headed by the Chief Observer, who is responsible for the tasks of the Mission relating to the laying down of arms. The Chief Observer will serve as coordinator of the monitoring and verification mechanism, and as such will also bear responsibility for the verification of the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities. The full functions of the observer component are outlined in the section above on tasks. To fulfil its tasks, the Mission is estimated to require about 40 observers at the national level, 90 observers at the regional level and 320 observers at the local level. Overall, the Mission will require about 450 observers, in addition to a number of civilians who will be deployed in the transitional local zones and points for normalization.

Coordination and substantive support component

20. The Mission will operate in 40 widely dispersed locations: a national headquarters, 8 regional headquarters and the 23 transitional local zones for normalization and 8 transitional local points for normalization established under the Agreement. It will include international observers, national and international civilian staff and United Nations Volunteers. The Mission will require effective operation and coordination of field offices to ensure that all parts of the Mission are able to provide timely and effective support to the activities of the observer component. In addition, the Mission staff will be coordinating closely with the United Nations country team. The coordination and substantive support component will also provide support to the Mission on training, legal affairs, conduct and discipline and gender mainstreaming.

Field support component

21. The provision of logistical and administrative support to the Mission presents some peculiarities. As previously mentioned, the Mission will have a number of activities that it undertakes independently of the monitoring and verification mechanism, such as the verification of the laying down of arms. At the same time, as part of the mechanism, it will undertake operational activities alongside representatives of the Government of Colombia and FARC-EP at all levels, national, regional and local. For both sets of activities, given the level of services available in Colombia, the Mission's policy will be to rely as much as possible on qualified service providers, facilitated by either the Government or the Mission, upon the basis of comparative advantage in terms of time and cost. For example, the Government is well placed to facilitate the provision of vehicles for the mechanism and the Mission owing to a pre-existing large-scale vehicle contract, whereas the Mission is in a position to facilitate the provision of radio equipment owing to a global service contract already in place with the Department of Field Support. A letter of assist setting out the scope and description of logistical and administrative support to be provided by the Government of Colombia and by the Mission to the mechanism, and by the Government to the Mission is currently being drafted, following extensive discussions between the United Nations and the Government of Colombia in technical working groups, as well as consultations with FARC-EP that started in May 2016.

22. For services that the United Nations is in a position to deliver, every effort is made to utilize local service providers and existing capacity within the United Nations country team. Considering the difficulty of access and the lack of basic services in some of the areas, the Mission will seek solutions of a temporary nature or those that build upon existing infrastructure. This approach will facilitate timely activation, minimize costs and, where feasible, also support local communities.

23. The scoping visits of the transitional local zones and points for normalization outlined below have revealed the formidable challenges that lie ahead in developing infrastructure to support the deployment of the observer teams and then sustaining them operationally for the duration of their tasks. Several transitional local zones and points for normalization are located in difficult-to-reach areas with no access to electricity, communications or potable water. Some of these locations are inaccessible by road and can be reached only by river systems or by helicopter. In some cases, the ability to reach locations even by helicopter is limited by extremely high terrain and difficult weather conditions. While the result of the scoping visits was clearly positive and an initial support concept for local headquarters for the monitoring and verification mechanism is under development, detailed support planning and validation will be required before the resource implications of operating in such an environment are fully understood.

24. While every effort has been made to ensure that the mission support footprint remains as light as possible, the challenge of servicing 40 locations in terrain as wide-ranging as tropical rainforest, mountains and riverine and coastal plains in a geographically large country will require a flexible and adept mission support component that has sufficient integral resources to support implementation of the mandate.

Security component

25. The Government of Colombia, specifically the National Police of Colombia, will assume responsibility for the security of the monitoring and verification mechanism and the Mission at large. Through a unified security structure, the Department of Safety and Security will provide operational support and advice relating to the United Nations security management system policies and procedures, in close cooperation and liaison with the Colombian authorities.

26. The security management system will be covering both the country team and the Mission with a unified security structure, under the responsibility of a designated official. The Chief Security Advisor/Chief Security Officer will report to and be the principal adviser to the designated official. In addition, the Chief Security Advisor/Chief Security Officer will advise the Special Representative on operational matters that relate to the Mission's security.

27. Security officers will be posted in each regional office to monitor the situation continuously and ensure that security management system standards are applied under the responsibility of the field security coordination officers. The security officers will provide security support to the observers in the teams for the transitional local zones and points for normalization. Mission security focal points are to be appointed in each transitional local zone and point for normalization in order to enable permanent liaison and coordination with the security officers.

28. The field security coordination officers participated in the six tripartite teams that conducted simultaneous scoping visits to the transitional local zones and points for normalization. The projected risk levels for most of the relevant threats identified (attacks by spoilers, crossfire and social unrest) are deemed acceptable, providing that the relevant risk management measures are fully implemented. Regarding the threat of land mines, residual anti-personnel mines may be a risk in some zones. A comprehensive report is being prepared by the Department of Safety and Security to update the risk analysis for this particular threat and, if necessary, include additional proposed security risk management measures.

Geographical deployment

29. Given the role of the Mission as the international component and coordinator of the monitoring and verification mechanism, the offices of the Mission and the mechanism will be co-located, even though a number of the Mission's functions and tasks are carried out independently of the mechanism. In keeping with the parties' agreement on the regional deployment of the mechanism in eight cities that provide the most convenient access to the transitional local zones and points for normalization, the Mission will have eight regional offices co-located with the regional headquarters of the mechanism in those cities: San José de Guaviare, Florencia, Popayán, Villavicencio, Medellín, Quibdó, Bucaramanga and Valledupar. The leadership of the regional offices will comprise a civilian Head of Office and the most senior United Nations observer in the region, who will act as the coordinator of the regional headquarters of the mechanism. In addition, the regional offices will include about 11 observers and 9 civilian staff in charge of liaison, public information, security and mission support.

30. The Mission will seek to ensure that the regional offices are equipped with liaison and public information staff to respond fully to the keen interest of regional actors in information and dialogue. This will supplement and reinforce the monitoring and verification mechanism's own commitment in this respect.

Participation of women

31. The Mission in Colombia is committed to maximizing the number of women in all functions and positions. In spite of the laudable effort by some of the observer-contributing countries, the Mission is at present very far from the goal of 20 per cent of observers that was set. The Mission will therefore prioritize the recruitment of qualified women for the civilian staff and United Nations Volunteer positions to be deployed to the local headquarters of the monitoring and verification mechanism in order to reach the goal of 20 per cent of United Nations personnel deployed to supervise the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities and the laying down of arms. I continue to urge observer-contributing countries to increase their contribution of women observers and thank those that have done so.

32. At the regional level, the Mission is committed to achieving strict gender parity among civilian personnel in all substantive positions. Similarly, at the national level, every effort will be made to achieve gender parity among civilian personnel.

Overall resources

33. On the basis of the provisions of the Agreement, including the Mission's mandate as endorsed by both parties, the personnel required for the Mission to fulfil its mandate are as follows: about 450 observers and an appropriate civilian component, as decided by the General Assembly in the context of its consideration of the Mission budget, to be deployed in 40 locations, including the transitional local zones and points for normalization.

VI. Observations

34. In my letter of 22 July 2016 (S/2016/643), I expressed satisfaction at the current level of preparation for the deployment of the Mission, in particular the swift deployment of United Nations observers within days of the signing of the Agreement. The number of observers currently stands at 80, which has enabled the Mission to participate fully in the recent scoping visits to the local areas where the separation of forces and the laying down of arms will take place. The Mission is also ready to fulfil its coordination functions within the monitoring and verification mechanism at the national and regional levels as soon as the mechanism is established. In addition to the level of Mission preparedness, the successful tripartite visits to the zones carried out from 8 to 15 August, the working relationship between Colombian officers and FARC-EP combatants during the exercise, the positive reaction of the local population, all go to show that preparations are on track, not only from a technical viewpoint but also from a political perspective. I acknowledge that the implementation of the peace agreements is a major financial undertaking for the Colombian Government.

Discussions are under way involving the Colombian Government, the Secretariat and Member States on how best to support the logistics of the transitional local zones and points for normalization.

35. Against this positive background, several issues have arisen, some concerning operational aspects of the Mission and some concerning substantive issues and the broader political context.

36. While a proper division of responsibilities in terms of the provision of services has been discussed with the Government, the issue of cost-sharing for those facilities and services that are used jointly by the members of the monitoring and verification mechanism remains outstanding. I recommend that the Mission share with the Government the cost of activating and operating the mechanism, exclusive of government-provided security costs, in proportion to the number of United Nations observers and staff relative to the total number of mechanism personnel. Current planning indicates that the Mission's usage of facilities and services at the national, regional and local levels will be approximately 50 per cent of the total requirement. Separately, the Mission will be responsible for bearing the cost of Mission-specific activities, including those relating to the laying down of arms.

37. Regarding the composition of the Mission, the Agreement provides that observers would come mainly from countries from the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). In view of existing pledges from observer-contributing countries this is certain to be the case. The Mission has reiterated its commitment to CELAC to be inclusive of all countries from the region as it continues to staff its observer and civilian components. For reasons of sensitivity borne out by long experience of peace operations, the neighbouring countries of Colombia have not been requested to nominate observers. The United Nations is, however, open to alternative arrangements agreed by both parties. At the same time, the Mission is making every effort through the United Nations competitive process to recruit qualified civilians from all CELAC countries, including neighbours of Colombia, with a solid background in peace processes and United Nations affairs.

38. Several Colombian civil society and human rights organizations have asked about the role and relationship of the Mission vis-à-vis human rights. According to reliable data from Colombian think tanks, the Colombian Defensoría del Pueblo (Ombudsman's Office) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the unilateral ceasefire that has been in place for more than a year on the part of FARC-EP has led not only to a drop in violence among belligerents but also to a decrease in violence against the population in the conflict areas. While the termination of the conflict between the Government of Colombia and FARC-EP will certainly not do away with all acts of violence against civilians, in which several other armed actors are involved, the definitive cessation of the conflict, which the Mission is established to facilitate, will, it is to be hoped, mark an improvement in the protection of human rights in Colombia.

39. In addition, as mentioned above, the rules of the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities to which the Colombia Government and FARC-EP are committed do not only prohibit acts of mutual aggression. They also contain a commitment to refrain from any "act of violence or threat of violence that endanger the life and personal integrity of the civilian population, in particular gender-based violence". The Mission, together with the monitoring and verification mechanism, will bear

responsibility for verifying that this important commitment is fully complied with throughout the duration of the ceasefire process. Moreover, at all levels the mechanism is open to receiving complaints, advice and recommendations from the population, the authorities and civil society organizations.

40. The Mission and the monitoring and verification mechanism will naturally have to cooperate not just with national institutions mandated to protect and promote human rights in Colombia, such as the Defensoría del Pueblo, the Consejería Presidencial para los Derechos Humanos (Office of the Presidential High Commissioner for Human Rights), Colombian human rights organizations, which are well established and respected, but with OHCHR. Such organizations will continue to work throughout the conflict areas, and their extensive expertise will be helpful to the mechanism. Provided adequate resources are at their disposal, national and international human rights organizations will certainly contribute to ensuring a transition from conflict to a peace free of violence and human rights violations, well beyond the duration of the ceasefire and the laying down of arms.

41. In their negotiating agenda adopted on 26 August 2012, the Colombian Government and FARC-EP had agreed to negotiate modalities for the ratification of the final peace agreement, once concluded. Following protracted and inconclusive discussions on the subject on 23 June 2016, together with the signing of the Agreement on the Ceasefire, the parties agreed to heed the decision to be made by the Constitutional Court of Colombia with regard to the modalities for popular ratification of the peace agreements. On 18 July 2016, the Government's decision to submit the final peace agreement to a plebiscite was ruled constitutional by the Constitutional Court.

42. In spite of this factor of uncertainty, the parties have decided to pursue preparations for the implementation of the ceasefire agreement. For example, joint training of members of the monitoring and verification mechanism — government representatives, FARC-EP representatives and United Nations observers — will take place in the coming weeks. The joint training will bring cohesiveness on the way in which the ceasefire will be verified once it enters into force, and will build further confidence in the peace process among combatants on both sides. The debate surrounding the plebiscite notwithstanding, I believe that such exercises, together with further dialogue with authorities and civil society on the Agreement are in themselves useful peacebuilding initiatives. The Mission, while remaining prudent in its deployment and attentive to political developments, will ensure that it can contribute fully to the success of these initiatives.

43. Concerning the ongoing negotiations in Havana, I note that important issues remain on the table, including modalities for the implementation of the agreements and for national and international verification mechanisms. An agreement on the reintegration of FARC-EP combatants is of particular importance. The ceasefire and laying down of arms is part of a longer-term process whose sustainability is conditional upon a reliable programme of reintegration for FARC-EP combatants. I therefore invite the parties to produce a solid and comprehensive programme in this respect. In conclusion, I would like to thank my Special Representative, Jean Arnault, for his continuing leadership, and to commend the Government of Colombia and FARC-EP for their determination to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion. I remain deeply committed to providing all the support that is required of the United Nations to this process. After so many years of conflict, it may be difficult for many Colombians to imagine a future in peace. Yet the opportunity is at hand today and I hope they will be able to seize it.